

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY WA POLICE
TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2015**

SESSION ONE

Members

**Ms M.M. Quirk (Chair)
Dr A.D. Buti (Deputy Chair)
Mr C.D. Hatton
Ms L. Mettam
Mr M.P. Murray**

Hearing commenced at 2.30 pm**Ms CHRISTINA WARD****Deputy Director, Edmund Rice Centre, examined:**

The CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for your interest and appearance before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for its inquiry into the methods employed by WA Police to evaluate performance, specifically the performance measures related to management of personnel. I am the chair and the member for Girrawheen. On my right is Dr Tony Buti, deputy chair, member for Armadale. On my left is Libby Mettam, the member for Vasse—Busselton. On her left is Mick Murray, the member for Collie—Preston. And the member for Balcatta, Chris Hatton, will be with us shortly. The hearing is a formal procedure of the Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to the proceedings of the house itself. Even though the committee is not asking witnesses to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making the transcript of proceedings for the public record. If you refer to any document during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record.

Before we proceed to questions, I need to ask you a series of questions. Have you completed the “Details of Witness” form?

Ms Ward: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

Ms Ward: Yes.

The CHAIR: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses briefing sheet provided with the “Details of Witness” form?

Ms Ward: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions in relation to being a witness at today’s hearing?

Ms Ward: No.

The CHAIR: This might seem somewhat removed from the work of Edmund Rice, but we are looking at how police measure their performance, and obviously interaction with migrant and refugee communities is important. We are also looking at the employment of people from CALD backgrounds in the police service. Perhaps you might like to give us a bit of background about Edmund Rice.

Ms Ward: The Edmund Rice Centre has been operating in Mirrabooka since 1998. It was started to support refugees and migrants coming to the area, particularly from refugee backgrounds. 1998–2000 was before the humanitarian settlement strategy was put in place, so there was not a great deal of support as far as English classes and things were concerned. So it started off with English classes, a bit of life skills for living in Australia, and then some small programs for youth. Over the years we have built up, and we are funded by federal, state and other—it is funding from everywhere. We have a lot of programs that support people after they have completed their six or 12 months of initial orientation and settlement. We do things like a subsidised driving program. We have a housing assistance program. We have a youth engagement program. Then the other side is youth programs. We are funded by the Department of Sport and Recreation to provide park

programs in the City of Stirling and Wanneroo, so we provide a program each day after school. The idea is that the kids can come to a local park, have some fun, learn about some sport; but the idea is that we can provide a pathway for those kids to then be engaged in a mainstream club, so a lot of the program is about socialisation as well.

Apart from that, we have special projects, which include a multicultural girls' AFL team, a mixed AFL team, a basketball team, soccer—I think that is about it. The idea of those programs is that we give the kids an opportunity to play in a team. We give them opportunities to meet with state sporting bodies; so all our teams are affiliated with, whether it is state basketball, Football West or the Football Commission. We try to, through those projects, enable the kids to reach their full potential, which, because of the barriers in place, they often cannot. For example, parents do not see the importance of sport. They have trouble getting their kids to training, particularly if they get to an elite level where there are two or three trainings a week and there are games on Saturdays and Sundays; so we support the families to be able to assist them for the kids to follow that pathway.

The CHAIR: Just a bit about your own background, Chris; can you tell us about that?

Ms Ward: I have been working at Edmund Rice Centre—I actually worked in a bank for 30 years and then decided I wanted to work with refugees and migrants. I realised I needed to get a degree; I did a social science degree. While I was doing that degree I volunteered at Edmund Rice Centre. I finished my degree and was employed by Centrecare as a settlement worker; so that was, through the department of immigration, meeting families off the planes and then supporting their settlement for six months. From there I was offered a job at Koondoola Primary School in multicultural community liaison. I moved to Edmund Rice to put the driving program in place. I have been the deputy director for the last six years.

The CHAIR: Can you give us a bit of an idea about your contact with clients of Edmund Rice? What sort of feedback have you had about relations with police, or were there any issues there?

Ms Ward: There are lots of issues, particularly with the youth. I have a connection with the families, particularly with the football program, and also I have worked with some communities for 10 or 11 years. I met them when they first came into Australia, and I am still working with them or I still see them or engage them in other activities. The police are always an issue, particularly with our youth.

The CHAIR: Can you perhaps expand on that a bit?

Ms Ward: Over the years there have been different issues with different groups. A few years ago there was a real problem with the kids hanging around in town and going to the gardens. We were working very diligently to get other programs in place to bring them back from that. We achieved that to a certain extent, but there will always be a bunch of kids who want to do drugs or drink or they do not want to engage with groups; they want to be antisocial, I guess. I have heard a lot of anecdotal stories such as, “We got picked up by the police but we didn't do anything”, et cetera. That has happened over the years. Last week a young man who started a project called FNTS—From Nothing to Something; I do not know whether you know Rachdar Gireneza —

The CHAIR: No.

Ms Ward: He was quite a troubled boy from when he was about 15 to 18. He was not in any serious trouble, but he wanted everything from everyone but he did not really want to work to do it. He was always sort of getting in trouble and being told to move on et cetera. In the last couple of years he has totally turned his life around. He is very involved with community engagement and youth engagement. He makes movies; they do a lot of music clips et cetera. I spoke to him when I knew I was coming here and I said, “Can you get a couple of your mates around and we can just have a chat about this?” I was really quite surprised because I said to the kids, “What's happening with the police? Any of you interested in becoming police officers?” They said, “No, no; we hate police.” I said, “What do you mean you hate the police?” They all had stories of being stopped and

searched and told to move on. I said, “But what about Don and what about Zen?” They said, “Oh, they’re different.” I said, “But they’re the police.”

The CHAIR: Just for the purposes of the transcript and my southern colleagues, Don and Zen work in the community or the sort of diversity side of policing; they are not in general policing. Most of these kids you are talking about, I presume, are African.

Ms Ward: African and Middle Eastern kids. I spoke to a few of the Burmese kids. The Burmese are the perfect settlement target, I guess. A couple of Muslim kids from Afghanistan or Iraq were in this group that I was talking to, and they all had anecdotes of being stopped. They said the police are racist and that they only pick on them, and I said, “Really?” But they all had a particular story and ended up being arrested or being given a move-on notice when they have set things up, and they said, “Then they followed us. We were on our way to the train station.” But then they said, “But a lot of this happened when we were 15 and 16.” They said, “When you’re that age, you’re a bit of a smart-arse. Now we’re older, we realise you have to be humble.” I said, “What made you feel that you could question the police, anyway?” The answer was that when they came here—of course the police forces in the countries they came from were never approachable, were corrupt et cetera. But when they came to Australia, they said that it was made very clear to them that the police in Australia treat everyone the same, they are fair, they are not racist, and if you ask them for their name and their number, they must give it to you. So, this is what has been taught from settlement, from other police officers or from the law video or DVD that came out. They felt it was their right to say, “Before I give you my name, you must give me yours”, or, “What’s your number?” Of course, that probably was not the right way to speak to the police. But, as I was saying, this is when they were 15 and 16, and if there is a group of kids, one always wants to be the spokesman. We did get that out, that really it is more about being a youth. As they get older—19 and 20—they understand it a little more. But it just seems to be that that is what their attitude is; even though they are older and they would treat the police differently, they still feel that they are being targeted. I think the time bomb article in *The West Australian* about three years ago, which suggested that the youth in Mirrabooka were all disengaged and were going to kill a policeman or something, affected so many of the youth, particularly the South Sudanese. A lot of the kids who were then targeted with racist comments had never been involved with any kind of criminal activity, and that did nothing for their confidence in the police. That was a really unfortunate episode. We complained about that and we took it to the tribunal. Although they were not in contempt and kind of won the case, I took some youth with me—one boy who plays for a Subiaco league team, and another one of our girls who is a state representative in Western Australian women’s football—and I think when the editor, the subeditor and several people on that committee met with these youth, their attitude seemed to change in a matter of half an hour.

[2.45 pm]

I think that probably one of the problems is the fact that there is not enough knowledge—not in the wider community, but maybe in the police or other kind of supervisory-type roles—because they have not met kids from this background and spoken to them, they do not have a great deal of knowledge of how the kids operate. You would understand, Margaret, from being in that community; it is very different. People need to take a while to trust you and they are influenced very quickly, so if a bad thing happens, it seems to quickly go around the community. I think mobile phones should be banned because it is amazing how, you know, one person hears something, it goes around all the place, so suddenly all the police are racists. The other thing some of the boys were saying too is they found that one police officer might be doing the interaction, and the others stand back, and they feel that—I do not know if this is going back to their home country, but they see that one person is the bully and the other officers stand back and even if they disagree, they could not say that they disagree because of that hierarchy, so that is their concept of a group of policemen. When I said to them, “Why don’t you want to be police officers? A couple of you went through the process. You could get in there and you could change the attitude”, they said, “But, no,

that's not how it works. We go into teaching or we go into community service, because we've had good role models and we've seen what they try to do for the community. Therefore, they are the positions that we want to get into." I thought that was quite adult, really, because I had never really considered that.

Again, I mentioned Don Emanuel-Smith and Zen and the fact that that community policing service is not there anymore has made such a difference to a lot of people in Mirrabooka, because there was a police presence there. People could go to Don; they trusted him. They could go to him, but they respected if he said, "No you're wrong. This is what you've done and you've got to pay the price" et cetera, they would accept that because they trusted what he would say. There were also a lot of Muslim girls who were very keen to join the police force because they saw Zen, who is a Muslim and wears a head cover. In the last 12 months, or a bit longer actually, since they have moved from Mirrabooka into the city, there is just no interaction at all. We have a program called Beatball, which is on the last Friday of every month. We usually get about 150 to 160 kids there from CALD, Aboriginal and mainstream backgrounds. The police were always there. Don came, Zen, and also there is Glynis Ozies who is an Aboriginal police officer. The kids interacted with them. They wore their uniform but they were not kitted up. They umpired the games, they chatted to the kids and that did so much to build relationships with the police community and they saw them as mentors and role models, I guess, because they were not seeing them in an official capacity. That is a real shame that we have lost that service in the area.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Hi again, I was with you on Saturday night with Ruth and Bella and everyone else. I do have a fair knowledge of the Edmund Rice Centre over the years and you are doing a great job. There seems to be a fair bit of emphasis on the community policing. I really do acknowledge that it is very, very important to have that community policing and if it is lacking, we need to know about it. It is very good indeed. This inquiry is about the policing and training and things like that, but what about the Edmund Rice Centre and other organisations around? What are they doing to change the culture of the perception of police, with this African culture in particular? Are there some really good things being done to swing that about? It seems to be a bit lopsided putting it back onto the police.

Ms Ward: Yes. I am not necessarily saying that I agree with what —

Mr C.D. HATTON: I know you are not necessarily saying that.

Ms Ward: It comes back to community policing. Don —

Mr C.D. HATTON: Don was there Saturday too.

Ms Ward: Yes. He would come once a term and speak; we have information sessions every second week. That is with the parents, the adults, and he would come and just do a general talk about policing. Zen would come up and speak to the women specifically about what they do if they have their handbags snatched or more personal safety-type issues. Of course, they were always at the community leaders' forum with the police; I think they are still continuing. They were just around. Everyone knew them; if you needed anything signed, you could go down to the police. They were familiar with the community, and the community just built that connection with them and would ask them about, "We want our kids to go into the police force." We still continue to—well, no, actually, we do not. We do not actually do anything about policing now that we do not have Don and Zen to do it.

Mr C.D. HATTON: That is my concern. If there is such disparity from the culture to the police, that is not there now, whether it was there or not, even when it was there. You are doing all these things there, the housing alliance, the life skills program, the driver education, which I have seen, it is really good. Could there not be something more to do with the cultural exchange between law and order and incorporate it?

Ms Ward: If you want to give me funding, we would do anything!

Mr C.D. HATTON: Okay. It is a good answer, yes.

Ms Ward: Actually, we have two grants in at the moment for—it is called the common goal soccer academy. I just happen to have it with me. We are looking for funding through two organisations. I think we will get it. Part of it is through the Scanlon Foundation and part through the Department of Sport and Recreation, and this program is in partnership with Mirrabooka Mosque. The idea is—I do not know if you are familiar with it. A few years ago, we had a program called Footy with the Fuzz. That was very well attended.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Sorry to cut you short. The Department of Sport and Recreation have since 2013–14 to 2017–18 put in over \$400 000 towards your programs, which is great. But what is happening outside there?

Ms Ward: This is the way. We actually applied for funding through the proceeds of crime, which unfortunately we did not get. This idea was that it is in partnership with the police, with the mosque and with that community. It does not necessarily have to be Muslim kids. They are going to be running a soccer program in partnership with the police. We will do the organisation; the imams will encourage the kids to come to the program. I feel that it is engagement with the kids themselves that is going to make the difference. The boy I am talking about, Rachdar, he has actually put a project together. He has got no way of lodging it, but it is called Collective Action, and he wanted to do a film project about improving the relationship between multicultural youth and the police. Actually, him and a group of his friends have put this together.

The CHAIR: That is pretty telling that he felt that that was an area that needed addressing.

Ms Ward: Yes. This is: What do we want to do? Improve relations between multicultural youth, increase tolerance of each other's position, increase empathy between these groups, reduce the level of conflict and animosity, improve social cohesion and community harmony, form relationships. So this is pretty much what you are —

Mr C.D. HATTON: Just to finish off and let the other members here have a say, could you be putting more into the youth leadership program in that area? Like, that is part of your component of what you do. I am not trying to tell you what to do, but if there is such an urgency for this cultural exchange to be better with the police, maybe, could that be something that could be developed at your end? If the police are going to develop something else, could you develop something at your end?

Ms Ward: Yes, definitely. As you saw, Don Emanuel-Smith was at the event on Saturday night, he is still very supportive of the youth in the area, but he does not even have the opportunity to come out very much to present. He will present to our youth leadership group when he is not working, I guess as a volunteer. That really makes a difference and he has done that several times, but it has not been a huge component, but it could be. I was so surprised by the reaction I got from this group of young men that I thought: Oh, I did not realise it was quite that bad. I thought it was more about—just they were not interested.

The CHAIR: Just a quick one. You know the policing arrangements have changed where you have these local police teams. Have they been in and visited Edmund Rice or gone to any of the events or anything?

Ms Ward: No, not really. We struggle to get them into Beatball. In all fairness, they pop in, but they come in kitted up and they are not able to engage. There has only been one or two occasions when we needed to call the police for an incident there; in the 10 years I have been involved in it, it goes really well. They always say, “Yes, we're there, if there is any trouble call us.” But that is not what we want. Also, as I said, they do come in and I think they would like to stay longer, but they say, “We are policing a lot of areas. We can only come in. We have to be dressed like this because we might get a callout to somewhere else.” I think they would like to support it, but they do not really have the opportunity.

Dr A. D. BUTI: Chris, did you say that the community policing is terminated; that there is not that community policing anymore?

Ms Ward: No, there is not.

Dr A. D. BUTI: So that is my point: you can only do so much; you cannot do anything more unless there is community policing. The police need to be involved. No matter what you do, unless there is police there, it is no point. The community policing not being there anymore I think is a major detriment to anything you are trying to do to improve relationships.

Ms Ward: Even just things like people would pop in there to get maybe things signed, or if they have got a fine or something, they could go in and there would be someone in there that would speak their language or they could bring someone with them and they could just have things explained to them. Often, in my experience, when CALD people get a fine, they absolutely go to pieces. They think they are going to go to jail. A couple of young girls that I work a lot with got a ticket on the train. They were actually coming to the city to perform at a Refugee Week event and one of them did not have their school pass. They bought a concession ticket, so this girl got a fine. She was even too frightened to tell me and I did not hear about it until the mother rang and was really, really angry, “She’s got this fine. Will she have to go to court? Can she end up getting a record?” I said, “No; it is a ticket. If she had told me, I probably could’ve called with an explanation and you wouldn’t have had to worry about it.” But because the child did not tell the parent and hid the fine, it ended up doubling, because they had not paid it. That was another thing. Things surprise you. I thought: I cannot believe that kids who have been here pretty much all their school life were still so frightened to tell their parent that they had a ticket.

Dr A. D. BUTI: Has the community policing gone because of the new frontline? Why has it gone? Is it because of the new model?

Ms Ward: At one stage, I think Zen went to the city.

Dr A. D. BUTI: Yes. She is there now.

Ms Ward: And also I think Don moved out there as well to East Perth and someone did replace him; a new sergeant came in. But that was only for a very short time and then suddenly they were all gone, and the office has closed. It was just such a central place.

Mr C.D. HATTON: That was at Mirrabooka shopping centre, was it not?

Ms Ward: Yes, and it was also between the bus station—and so they were just there to talk to kids. If there was any trouble, they would just have a chat with them; I guess the old model of policing where they could give them a talking to and it did not go any further than that.

[3.00 pm]

Mr C.D. HATTON: Was it beneficial that it was virtually just near your centre, the Edmund Rice Centre?

Ms Ward: Not to so much the Edmund Rice Centre, but everyone’s there.

The CHAIR: Centrelink, justice, housing and works, housing.

Ms Ward: The MMRC, yes, the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre. It is a real hub, so it is a perfect place for a community police station.

Mr C.D. HATTON: It is interesting that the Mirrabooka Police Station, which is being opened officially this afternoon, is right next door too. So, if there is that fear of the major police station, maybe that community centre would have been good to break that down.

Ms Ward: Even now people would not consider going to a police station. They come in and I will say “We will just go around to Mirrabooka.” They say, “No, we go down to Mirrabooka to the shopping centre. They have closed.” It worked on so many levels.

The CHAIR: Just while we are on this community stuff—I do not want get off it, but I think it is relevant. There was a murder recently or someone disappeared.

Ms Ward: Is this the Somali?

The CHAIR: Yes, and as I understand there was some distress expressed by relatives of the deceased that no-one had really taken them seriously for some time that this person was missing. Is that sort of feedback you are getting from people?

Ms Ward: Yes, it is interesting that we only got that feedback after the body was found. I think the community themselves were not convinced that he had been murdered. I think they really thought that he had gone off to avoid trouble.

The CHAIR: Okay, that has balanced that out.

Ms Ward: Yes.

The CHAIR: In somewhere like Mirrabooka, if there were police officers with faces like the community itself, do you think that would be an advantage?

Ms Ward: Yes. That became very obvious with Zen. Although she is from Singapore, just the fact that she was dark and wore a hijab—I guess it just opened people to say that yes, she could be a policewoman from that background. I got another bit of feedback from some of the kids saying that if they wanted to join the police, they would not be able to pass the entrance exams. Although kids may have been here for eight or nine years, when they are in a group they tend to go in and out of their own language, because although they speak English very well, they do not understand a lot of concepts in English, so they will revert to their own language to clarify issues. Someone will say something and they will look at someone who repeats it in Kirundi or Dinka or Arabic they will say, “Oh, yeah.” I think that comes out. We have supported a lot of CALD youth and adults going to university or TAFE. We do quite a bit of proofreading. Most of them have got masters or degrees, but even at that stage, the written English is difficult because they are still thinking in their own languages and writing in English. So, often on the first reading of something you think that it is terrible, but if you read it again, you can see that all the concepts are there, it is just the grammar. I think it is different at school because, I guess, teachers develop it in a different way, but when it is something like a set exam and the answers are expected to be grammatically correct, I think some of the kids would fail miserably, which is unfortunate, because it does not reflect on their intellect, it is just their ability to write. They could probably articulate it really well, but they struggle to write it down.

The CHAIR: Now, Edmund Rice also deals with a lot of Aboriginal kids. Is the experience of Aboriginal kids different or the same from your knowledge?

Ms Ward: It seems to be quite similar as far as how they feel—not the necessarily how the police view them, but how they perceive the police view them. There was until recently—still is obviously—a lot more Aboriginal kids involved in the justice system, but there are more and more CALD kids becoming involved. We have some playing football—I think was last weekend actually—against a team at Banksia Hill. The girls are playing the girls and then we are going out in a couple of weeks and the boys are playing the boys. That is trying to engage with the kids in care, but also for our kids to see what it actually looks like in the detention centre and hopefully keep them away from that path. But there are more and more kids and it is generally drug related.

The CHAIR: I understand that you are aware of one young man who did apply to the police.

Ms Ward: A woman, Susan Chuot. She was mentored by Don and Zen and she went almost right through. She had applied. She also plays football with quite a few police officers. I think she was accepted, actually, but she said her boyfriend said no.

The CHAIR: And she is African?

Ms Ward: Yes. That was really unfortunate, because I think she would have been an amazing police officer, but there was no arguing it. You know, serious boyfriend; they were going to get married—“No, you cannot be doing that.”

The CHAIR: That is a pity.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Can I ask you about funding and resourcing, if I may. You get funding from the commonwealth maybe periodically over time, you get funding from the state, you get funding from the university probably a bit here and there or whatever—it depends on the programs or whatever—NGO, maybe organisations, maybe just occasionally I suppose, and foundation funding like the Annie Dawson foundation —

Ms Ward: That has gone.

Mr C.D. HATTON: That has gone, yes. Your reliable funding is the commonwealth and state. Does the council give you any funding? I know they do other things to support you and probably do it well, but do they fund you?

Ms Ward: No, we do not get any funding from local government.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Given that Mirrabooka and that region there, the northern corridor is very high density multicultural, probably the most in WA and probably in parts of Australia, are you getting enough support from the commonwealth government, now or in recent years, do you think?

Ms Ward: One of the issues with the funding from the commonwealth government—you probably met Ruth on Saturday —

Mr C.D. HATTON: Yes, Ruth is now with the City of Stirling, just recently.

Ms Ward: Youth Futures. She has had a problem with quite a lot of federally funded—they are now funded through the Department of Social Services. Those settlement programs are for people from refugee backgrounds who have been here up to five years. When she has been promoting her program, most of the kids coming have been here six, seven or 10 years and I know it has been difficult for her because these kids need assistance, they need support, but they have already been here for five years. Often it is because they came when they were aged six years to 12 years or something, and these issues do not occur until they become teenagers. So, we have been looking for mainstream mental health organisations to refer them to, but that referral often does not go anywhere, because they say, “No, they cannot come here for help.” “You cannot help me; I won’t worry about it.” Ruth and the City of Stirling work out of the multicultural centre at Herb Graham. It is a place that, again, everyone in the community is familiar with. They go there for meetings—their community meetings, general meetings with other service providers et cetera. So that is the ideal place to have it, but you cannot from —

Mr C.D. HATTON: Okay, so if I could just ask: the commonwealth and the state and the City of Stirling have an agreement on the way to introduce new migrants to that particular hub.

The CHAIR: There is no agreement.

Mr C.D. HATTON: All right, that is what I am asking about. That is not my point. The point is: that is how it works, though?

The CHAIR: No, the people who arrive there —

Mr C.D. HATTON: Hold it, how does it work?

Ms Ward: There have not been a great deal of Africans arriving in the last years, but they come to the airport, immigration informs services, which is the MMRC in the north and Communicare —

The CHAIR: That is the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre, sorry!

Ms Ward: It is spread, so some of the new arrivals will go north and some will go south. They are picked up from the airport and housing is found, which is not government housing, obviously, it is

private rentals. Then they do that whole orientation process with the caseworkers working individually with the families, taking them to be enrolled at school, taking them to the bank, taking them to Centrelink —

Mr C.D. HATTON: Okay, so it rolls on, as it does.

Ms Ward: Yes, and then they are exited from that program and then they will go to the programs funded by the Department of Social Services, which are called settlement grant programs. Our driving, housing, life skills and general social work are funded by that service, but our clients can only have been in Australia up to five years.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Okay, so that is the commonwealth side of it.

Ms Ward: That is the commonwealth. After that, really the expectation is that people will then be able to go into mainstream services, which just does not happen, because people—we have a lot middle-aged women who come to our English programs and they have never been to school, they have never had any kind of formal education, so it is very unlikely that they will be able to speak English within five years; it is just not going to happen. They have their few hours at TAFE and they come to us. We try to give them enough English so they can communicate, but then they go home to their families and they all speak their home language. We are getting quite a few Vietnamese women who are coming now who have been here 20 and 30 years who have worked with their families on the farms et cetera and now they have got to an age where they are not working at the farms, their families have grown up and they cannot speak English. I guess it is the same process that a lot of the Italians went through in the 1950s and '60s. The difference is, of course, that a lot of these women do not have the strong support services that many of the established communities do. They go to their churches for advice and often the churches do not have much more knowledge than they do themselves, or they come to us or they go to the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre or they go to MercyCare. They go to the service providers that they are familiar with. Probably we see as many people who we are not funded to see, who we then cannot include in our stats, as we do with people we are funded to see, because when people come to you for a form to fill or a letter to read, if they cannot read and write in English, what are you going to do? There is nowhere to send them, so we just assist the people. There are some who are obviously more confident and more educated who pick up English quicker, who will usually access services. So, it is not like the whole community, and often those women are single mums with large families. It is quite often the children from those families who end up getting into trouble, because the mother just has not got a lot of control. It is that thing about the kids growing up in two cultures.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Having been involved out there and knowing a bit about how you operate, it is not just about Edmund Rice, it is about the whole thing going on out there with 18 to 20 per cent unemployment and you get the commonwealth or however—all the migrants keep coming in. That is fine as long as it is meaningful and there are outcomes that are good for everyone. Edmund Rice emphasises, and all credit, that parent involvement is so, so important, but the parent involvement is not always there for various reasons. So, you have not got that mentoring for those young adolescents and the police have their difficulties too. There is a fair bit more work to be done, is there not?

[3.15 pm]

Ms Ward: Sure. Actually, the only Office of Multicultural Interests funding that is out at the moment—we have applied for the youth component of that. There will not be a limit of arrival times. Whether we get it, or whoever gets it, that program will be targeting the youth in the community. The idea is to train them to be mentors and training them to facilitate programs for themselves. Also, there is a component of one-on-one casework that you can do with those youth. Whoever gets that, if it is done effectively, it is a good program. I think that is \$100 000 over two years, or something like that.

The CHAIR: I just have three very short questions. Firstly, there used to be—I know when I had a bit more to do with Mirrabooka—the super used to have community leaders from various CALD groups around there once a month for a lunch. Nothing like that takes place anymore?

Ms Ward: Nothing officially.

The CHAIR: Secondly, in terms of domestic violence, presumably language difficulties arise out of those situations, which would make it desirable for a more diverse police force. Do you agree with that?

Ms Ward: Yes, I do. We have had this issue come up quite regularly when someone will come to us—it happened just recently, actually, last week—who has been a victim of domestic violence, but they will not go to the police because they are frightened of the repercussions. You do not want to push them because if you push it too far, they go and then you cannot monitor it. As far as I was aware, the new structuring of the police force meant that there was going to be a group that targeted domestic violence.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Well, no.

Ms Ward: There was like a go-to person —

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is, yes. There is only a go-to person; that is the problem.

Ms Ward: Well, that go-to person, if you go on their website—I was trying to get in touch with Senior Sergeant Scott Arnold, who I believe is in charge of that area.

The CHAIR: At Mirrabooka.

Ms Ward: Well, I think he might be in —

The CHAIR: Joondalup?

Ms Ward: Yes. It is that whole new corridor. I went on the website and I could not find the number, then I found the number and it said there was no such number. After trying to make it out, I ended up phoning Zen actually. What I thought that they had told me they may be looking at, but we had not had any follow-up, was that if someone was involved with domestic violence, someone would come and visit them and tell them the process. This particular woman, that is what she needed; someone to come out and say, if you do make a report on this person, if you apply for a restraining order, how she would be protected or what the process is, pretty much. I had no-one.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Ombudsman brought a report down on Thursday which would suggest that the police are not doing that. They are not actually communicating to people about violence restraining orders et cetera.

Ms Ward: No, they are certainly not. Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre have got this you beaut commonwealth grant, which will really be great for us, because there will be then a person that you can then refer these people to to get the correct information.

The CHAIR: The final question I have is a bit of a tangent, sorry, but since my colleague mentioned federal funding: I noticed that the federal funding for marginalised youth in relation to terrorism seems to have had a fair take-up in the eastern states of those grants. It does not seem to be much given out here. Is that an area that Edmund Rice has had a look at?

Ms Ward: We did have a look at it and we —

The CHAIR: I would have thought that some of your programs fell squarely within it.

Ms Ward: But we address it how we address it and I think it is quite successful. I was quite offended actually by all this money going to stop radicalisation or to de-radicalisation. Most of our kids, particularly Muslim kids, would not even know what that meant. I just believe that we do it anyway. This program that we are looking at—the common goal soccer academy—will be addressing those issues in a more targeted way.

The CHAIR: Is the criteria for getting the grants such that your programs are outside of that?

Ms Ward: No, I think we could have put something together but the grant just was not asking the right questions. The outcomes that they wanted just seemed to go against how we would promote this program. They talk about social isolation. We address that all the time. The reason that we are not accredited with our English class is we do not want to be credited because we have a cohort of people that we want to teach some English. We want to make sure that they are not socially isolated, but we do not want to push them from one level to the next. We support our people and we have a good relationship with TAFE. We would try and get people to a level that they are confident enough to go on to TAFE but certain people just want to come and have their cup of tea and learn a few words of English. We have nearly 600 people come to our English classes in a week and I would say probably 50 per cent of them will probably not go any further because they are getting their needs met. A lot of those are Muslim women. Often it is the teachers that they will talk to and, quite often, it is not really about a problem; it is just needing someone to talk things through with and find out where they can get an answer. We just felt that we did not like it.

The CHAIR: Thank you for your time. You sort of got dobbed in to do this, so thank you very much and thank you for doing some research so that we had really firsthand information. Thank you for your evidence before the committee today. A transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days from the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Thanks very much, Chris.

Ms Ward: You're welcome. There are just some things that I have printed.

The CHAIR: We would like copy of that PowerPoint; that would be great.

Ms Ward: I notice your colleague is on the front page. This "Not Drowning, Waving" was done in 2009 by the Office of Multicultural Interests. It is of diverse young people at risk. I have had this since 2009 and I have flicked through it. I think a great deal of it—nothing has really changed and nothing seems to have come from this. I think there is quite a large section in there about involvement with the police. I found there were a few things, as always, that go out and then were stuck on the backburner until a few years goes by and then we seem to be going over the same thing again.

The CHAIR: Thank you for your time.

Hearing concluded at 3.23 pm
